This Birmingham Utilities Watershed Ecosystem Area – the Bear Hill Trail in Bethany—is at the border of Beacon Falls. This blue-blazed trail passes through a spruce/pine plantation, passes an old cellar hole, and drops into a valley on an old farm road. There is a stream crossing with a view to a water-fall during the rainy season.

There are white numbered discs on the trees for the following points of interest:

1. Spruce/white pine planted on abandoned agricultural land post-1932. Signs of white pine weevil damage.
2. Former farmhouse for the property.
3. The farm road went from Falls Rd., across Hopp Brook, to Pole Hill Rd.
4. A waterfall (in season) to the right.
5. Old road crossing at the brook.
6. Ridge to the left is a trap rock dike.
7. Trail junction—either direction loops back to this point. To follow the descriptions in order—go straight.
8. Stone wall indicates prior farm use.
9. Prior timber harvest. Sugar Maple growth insures a future stand of trees. Forest age ranges from 85 to 125 years.
10. Red Cedar means a likely former field.
11. Norway Spruce stand. Known for its large cones and drooping branches.
12. Mockernut Hickory. One of four native hickory species in the region.
13. Black Birch. Most common native birch.
14. Old farm road winds up the hill.
15. Yellow blazes along the trail indicate adjacent private property. Stay on the blue-blaze trail at all times.
16. Sugar Maple. Sap used for maple syrup.
17. To the left, down the hill, is a Shagbark Hickory. Distinctive "shaggy" bark.
18. Black Oak. Has furrowed bark.
19. Hemlock. (Evergreen.) Most have been wiped out by the hemlock wooly adelgid.
20. White Oak. Preferred by Appalachian basket makers.
21. White blazes provide boundary for a future Old Growth Preserve.
22. To the right, a (springtime) vernal pool. A crucial amphibian breeding area.
23. Red Maple. Known as soft or swamp maple. One of the most common CT trees.
24. Beech tree. Ridged and toothed leaves.
25. Whitewood. Has upright dry seed pods that are tulip-shaped.
26. Beautiful deciduous woods.
27. Scarlet Oak. Popular ornamental tree.
28. Basswood. Favorite for carvers.
29. Stone wall and old farm field.
30. Ash (on left with pink ribbon). Used for tools and baseball bats.
31. Sassafras. Tea made from the bark of the root an old cure for gout.
32. Southwest corner of the future Old Growth Preserve.
33. Ironwood. Hardwood tree used to make piano key movements.
34. Flat and stone-free area. Tilled for stones to create wall to the right.
35. Yellow Birch. Large hardwood tree. Likes moist soil.
36. Source of the stream crossed near #26.
37. Timber harvest area.
40-41. Old road travels up hill wrapping around south end of ledges.
42. Large glacial erratic (boulder).
43. Tall tree growth in hollow.
44. Deer trail and markings.
45. Look around for differences in this area of the trail.
46. Witch Hazel. Shrub used to make general remedies such as astringents.
47. Change in wood composition.
48. Flowering Dogwood. Understory tree with pale pink "flowers".

53 (BU)

BEAR HILL TRAIL SYSTEM

Bethany, CT

Birmingham Utilities Watershed/Ecosystem Area - PERMIT REQUIRED

Directions and Parking:

The Bear Hill Trail System's hiking entrance can be reached at the intersection of Falls Road and Pole Hill Road. Parking is available on either street.

Permitted Activities:

This site is for passive use and hiking only. All motorized vehicles are prohibited. Wading, swimming, biking and horseback riding are prohibited. Dogs are not permitted.

For more information about this location and to obtain a permit— contact:

Birmingham Utilities
Watershed Manager
(203) 735-1888

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BIRMINGHAM UTILITIES: BEAR HILL TRAIL

Bethany, Connecticut

0   0.05   0.1   0.2 Miles

BEACON FALLS

Tanney Drive

Falls Road

Falls Road

Pole Hill Road

N
W   E
S
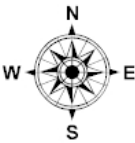
Johnson Road

Virginia Rail Drive

Lowell Land -
Bethany Land Trust

P Parking

Town Boundary

Wetlands

Water Bodies

Open Space - All Types

Rivers and Streams

Interstate or Parkway

Local Route

Trails

Streets